

The O'Malley-Brown Administration's Actions to Combat Opioids and Overdose Deaths in Maryland

The O'Malley-Brown Administration has taken a comprehensive approach to combatting the rising problem of opioid abuse in Maryland. On June 27, 2014, [Governor O'Malley issued an executive order](#) creating the Overdose Prevention Council (OPC), bringing together a coalition of state agencies to reduce the number of fatal and non-fatal unintentional overdoses in Maryland.

The coalition of agencies includes the Department of Health and Mental Health (DHMH), the Maryland State Police (MSP), the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS), the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), the Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention (GOCCP), and the Office of Problem Solving Courts (OPSC). The OPC will bring coordinated action to supplement the existing programs the State already uses:

DHMH began implementing the Maryland Opioid Overdose Prevention Plan:

The plan focused on: enhancing epidemiology; continuing to expand access to and the effectiveness of substance abuse treatment; supporting local public health action; addressing pharmaceutical opioid overdoses through clinical education/training, the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program and a Controlled Dangerous Substance Integration Unit; expanding the use of naloxone; and developing an emergency response plan in the event of an abrupt change in the prescribing, dispensing or use of opioids at the community level.

GOCCP is leading statewide efforts to increase the use of the life-saving, anti-opioid drug naloxone:

GOCCP is working with law enforcement agencies to increase the use of naloxone, including the Anne Arundel County and Annapolis Police Departments and Sheriff's offices in Somerset and Queen Anne's Counties.

GOCCP, OPSC and Judicial Information Systems are working together to support drug offenders who are undergoing court-ordered drug treatment:

Those agencies and members of the Governor's Office are working to analyze data relating to court ordered drug treatment and identify new and innovative ways to support drug offenders in treatment.

DPSCS, StateStat and DHMH are collaborating to study the rise in opioid overdoses:

The agencies are analyzing the recent rise in opioid overdoses to determine the frequency of overdose deaths among previously-incarcerated citizens, and developing prevention strategies.

DPSCS and DJS are working with K9 units to secure Maryland's correctional facilities:

DPSCS has trained five K9 units, and is helping train DJS K9 units, to detect and interdict contraband drugs which hinder the ability of drug-addicted offenders to receive proper treatment. DPSCS has also increased the available drug treatment slots in their facilities 23 percent since FY08.

The State Police are fighting the drug trade and helping Marylanders get treatment:

The MSP Criminal Enforcement Division continues to focus on combatting statewide heroin distribution. Initiatives are already underway to address inter-jurisdictional and cross border distribution, while MSP troopers will receive DHMH printed materials for drug treatment/overdose protection to distribute.

MIEMSS is facilitating collaboration between county and state medical personnel to reduce deaths:

MIEMSS has encouraged county-level physician EMS medical directors to partner with local law enforcement for education and training of law enforcement personnel on life-saving overdose prevention treatments. MIEMSS has also authorized and trained all state EMS to administer naloxone, a life-saving drug.

DJS is helping protect more Maryland at-risk youth:

DJS is now focused on identifying youth with substance abuse disorders as they enter DJS or go under DJS supervision in the community and then helping connect those youth with treatment facilities and resources.

Governor O'Malley signed the Good Samaritan Law during the 2014 Legislative Session:

The bill establishes that a person who in good faith assists someone experiencing a drug or alcohol-related medical emergency (such as an overdose) may be immune from criminal prosecution if evidence was obtained solely through the person seeking to help someone suffering from a medical emergency. The bill also protects the person who is experiencing the medical emergency under the same conditions.